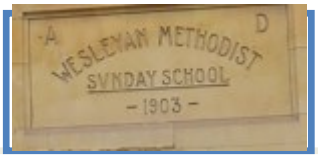
From August 2024
(Volume 172)



Cover Picture



Chelsea

Renana and boyfriend Anh just returned to Berlin after staying with us for a couple of nights. We had such a great laugh with them. They arrived Wed evening and spent a while doing a self-guided London tour before coming here for dinner where Jose and Cristina joined us and we all had a great evening.

The following day we did the requested 'Ralph & Lynn London tour. Taking the Rail replacement Bus (as the tube rolling stock is being replaced) we went from Wood Green to South Ken, enjoying an hour or so at the V&A and then a highlight...*Spanish ham and cheese baguettes* on the seating by the station. We then walked to The Thames via Chelsea seeing parts that were new to Lynn and myself and as Cadogan Pier was closed we walked through Battersea Park to Battersea Power Station and then via Uber Clipper to Greenwich. Puffing ourselves to the Royal Observatory we proudly showed them the great view of London. A tired foursome then got the DLR and tube and once again the Rail replacement bus home for a well earner nosh.

The following morning Renana joined me for my 6.00am swim and after a sad farewell we walked them to their bus to get to town for their connections to the airport. It was a rushed couple of days where we managed to accomplish our aims visiting all the promised landmarks ..plus some. We were sad to see them go..

Some of the following photos show our escapades.





Ok, I guess some folk just don't laugh...

Why the long face??? Cristina and Jose meeting with Renana and Ain again







...well sadly, I always did find toilet humour amusing





Those smiles say it all





At the V&A



The Pagoda in Battersea Park



The great walk along the Thames from Chelsea Bridge to Battersea



On Chelsea Bridge



This façade in The King's Road was retained (as the lower Google Image shows)

Approaching Greenwich Pier on The Uber Clipper

On The Clipper

Outside Battersea Power Station

There were some wonderful trees and they must have been planted in the certain knowledge that the future generations would enjoy them in their full glory



Woodland on the Ashridge estate extends to some two thousand acres nowadays and is the largest concentration of trees on any of the N T properties.




Photo History

We enjoyed the house setting and grounds and I felt some of the history would be appropriate here

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's crowning achievement at the Ashridge estate was the glorious Golden Valley, created for the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater between 1759 and 1768.

The 'Canal Duke' The Duke of Bridgewater was engaged to be married when he commissioned Brown, but the marriage never took place and he turned his attention to building inland waterways. These projects helped usher in the Industrial Revolution and earned him the nickname of the 'Canal Duke'. His family had owned the estate, originally a monastic college, since 1604, when it was bought by his ancestor Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper to Elizabeth I and Lord Chancellor to James I of England/VI of Scotland.

Brown's account book, records payments from the Duke of £2,946 11 shillings and 7 pence between 1759 and 1768, a remarkably large amount for making relatively few changes to the parkland. We know that Henry Holland Snr, whose son later married Brown's eldest daughter Bridget, was asked to build a new house in the 1760s on the site of the present orangery, so it is possible that some of the money may have been connected with this.

Until this point the Egertons had been living in the old medieval monastic buildings which were becoming very dilapidated. These buildings were hidden from the park by a high perimeter wall with two gatehouses for access. This would have seemed very old fashioned to Brown, who liked the lawn to flow all the way up to the front of the house. Some of the old wall, adjacent to the larger gatehouse, was demolished to make space to build the new house, directly bordering the newly expanded great lawn. The gate house was remodelled and connected to the house by a corridor.

Golden Valley

With its sweeping, woodland-fringed dips and curves, Golden Valley is classic Capability Brown. Coming across it on the carriage drive between Ashridge House and the village of Little Gaddesden, it's a surprise that takes your breath away.

The informal clumps of trees to the north and east of the house shelter the house but allowed views from the house to the darker woods beyond and, through vistas created earlier, to the open commons. The main view to the north, along the Ash Riding allee (now totally lost) ran to Ivinghoe Common, which was later turned into a park and is now within the listed historic landscape. The other views between Brown's copses on the main lawn are closed by a line of trees within the contemporary park boundary. The views to the east finish at Cromer Wood on the eastern side of the Golden Valley, acting as a wood belt around the edge of the estate, a typical Brownian feature. The village of Little Gaddesden to the North East is screened from the house by Brown's very careful placement of the copses. Most of these clumps were carved out of existing woods. All of this can be seen on Grey's map of 1762, which was made while Brown's work was in progress.

The famous Queen beech stood in one of the clumps here. This extraordinary tree was 41 metres (134 feet) tall and had 24 metres (79 feet) of clean trunk. In the early 1900s it was said to be the tallest beech in England. The most southerly clump extends right down the slope into the crook of a sharp bend in the valley, exaggerating its curving line. This clump also blocks the view to the south, creating a secluded atmosphere, but at the same time tempting the wanderer down the valley to find out what is beyond.

Creating vistas

By a combination of felling and careful planting, Brown gave the wood along the north-east edge of the valley a satisfyingly sinuous edge. When viewed from either end of the valley, this creates the illusion of a progression of woods, one behind the other, fading into the middle distance. The planting on the south side of the valley is broken to allow views from the house down into the valley and glimpses from the valley back towards the house. Here the park opens out into a broad vista studded with occasional trees. From the higher vantage point of the house, this view was framed between two old avenues and encompassed a wide panorama of rolling countryside.

The access to the house followed the old direct routes used since medieval times. In a complete Brown design these would have been replaced by longer and more sweeping approaches. The current network of drives, cutting across the Brownian features, dates from the 1820s.

It is thought that Brown's work included the kitchen garden and ice house which are situated about a mile and a half away (the ice-house near the mansion is later, dating from 1816-17). Brown commonly placed the kitchen garden well away from the house, so as not to interrupt the view. The payment of £100 (equivalent to £171,400 in 2015) on 26 Feb 1761 'to Mr Holland on account of the garden wall' in Brown's account book, is thought to refer to the wall of the kitchen garden.





.EPOD
@epod3000
11
.EPOD's artwork draws inspiration from the rich heritage and history of Ashridge House. Known for its classical and historic flavour, his work beautifully captures the essence of this style, making it a true reflection of his unique artistic vision.


JXC
@jxcdesigns
10
JXC draws inspiration from the WWII period when Ashridge House served as a hospital, nursing injured soldiers and providing shelter. His artwork reflects this history, capturing the house's role as a sanctuary and a place of healing and escape during the war.


Your country needs you.
Enlist as a nur
now






15
TEAONE
@teaone_gavin_renshaw
TeaOne: Drawing inspirtation from the exquisite floral displays that grace the grounds of Ashridge House, this piece captures the vibrant beauty and natural elegance of the estate's lush, blooming surroundings.





















ASPIRE
@aspireartwork

Aspire's piece focuses on the nesting Red Kites, a bird of prey successfully reintroduced to the UK after near extinction By incorporating elements from Ashridge House's art collection and architecture, Aspire aims to celebrate the house's cultural heritage and connection to the natural world.



CURTIS HYLTON
@curtis_hylton

Curtis Hylton's artwork is as much a surprise to us as it is to you! Known for creating art inspired by the moment, Curtis ensures each piece is truly special and one of a kind.






PERSPICERE
17
@perspicereartist
Perspicere's portrait is of a World War II British nurse at Ashridge House, honouring its rich history. This tribute acknowledges the crucial role of medical professionals during the war, linking Ashridge's grandeur to stories of resilience and service, and commemorating their often-overlooked sacrifices amidst the chaos of conflict.